

are really most simple, and by using them children acquire such a thorough understanding of the various values of the notes that time ceases to puzzle them, and enormously lessens the difficulty of reading.

I must say that the tonic sol-fa, though not absolutely necessary to the success of the system, is a great advantage, and, far from the two methods creating confusion in the child's mind, the sol-fa helps to simplify the old notation. To me, one of the greatest charms of this system is, that children are introduced to good music at once; the duets are delightful and most beautifully harmonised, and the exercises tuneful enough. It is delightful to compare the pleasure children take in their music, when taught by this system, with the case of a little boy, of whom I heard lately, who had learnt music for two years, and whose conscientious teacher still kept him entirely to scales and exercises.

J. H.

## RESUME OF MISS MASON'S SPEECH.

AFTER having expressed her pleasure at meeting so many friends interested in the F.N.E.U., Miss Mason went on to speak of the Society itself. She showed how during the nine or ten years of its existence it has been growing in all directions, and has been sending out new branches everywhere. Not only have most of these branches become self-supporting, but some have shown their strength and stability by continually increasing in numbers, and also by sending out new branches from themselves, and by increasing the number of lectures, thus proving that the Society has in itself the *principle of life*. A society, just as much as an individual, lives only as it grows, feeds, and produces—as it feeds on new ideas, as it grows in numbers, in strength, and in wisdom, and as it produces new forms of energy and new branches. All these forms of vital activity are found in the F.N.E.U.

Another great characteristic of the Society is its *sanity*—it is essentially a society of parents, and one of the first articles of the creed of the Society is that parents are the wisest and best people in the world—that they are endowed with a special wisdom to enable them to fulfil the work given them to do. Perhaps one

proof of the sanity of the parents is that they are ready to take into their society those who are not parents, and are willing to listen to their advice, thereby acknowledging that though they feel themselves to be the best readers of the individual character of their children, there are points on which the help of an outsider is invaluable.

The sanity of the Society as a whole has certainly been shown in the sweet reasonableness with which the work has been carried on—when it was first started it was felt that it covered such a large field, and would include such diverse minds, that there would be many dangers and difficulties in the way of its growth, but such has not been the case. The Society has gone on quietly, unadvertised, unadvertised, but always steadily and surely growing.

Perhaps it is a proud boast to say that the next great characteristic is that it is *humble*. The Students of the House of Education have touched the key-note of the Society in having chosen as their lodge the *truth*, the central idea of which is *humility*. The Society distinguishes between opinions and knowledge—its great aim is not to spread abroad opinions, but to gain knowledge. It hears of new ideas which seem worth knowing; it seeks out those who know most about these ideas, and then makes them its own. Its rule is to listen, to learn, to read, and, then only, to talk. In this way is gathered into this Society such a body of living educational thought as perhaps has never been collected in the world before, and this it has gathered from all sources.

It is thus shown to be a living society, a sane society, a humble society.

One great feature of the Society is the method of teaching adopted. We teach not the "ics" and "ologies," but Nature and Human Nature—these, in fact, cover the whole aim of our teaching. Our Nature teaching is of a living kind—we are anxious that our children should know how a plant lives, and how it grows, rather than that they should pull it in pieces and know how to describe it in technical terms. We venerate life exceedingly, and feel how lovely it is, and teach its loveliness. All communication with life is a source of life, and the more we study and love life the more we live, so it is to Nature herself and to Nature as she is that we take the children, and thus help them constantly to lay in life. If the children are taught to know and love the flowers and birds their own inquisitiveness will do away with almost all need of text books for them, and will also make their elders study Nature more closely so as to be able to answer their questions. The story of the foundation of a branch is almost always the same—the branch is

formed, an adults' Natural History Club is started, then a childrens' Natural History Club. Simplicity is the key-note of our Nature teaching, because we feel life so simple.

*Human Nature* is taught in all sorts of aspects and connections in history and in literature, and this teaching is given, not through cut and dried text books from which every stain of life has been crushed, but wherever that is possible straight from the very sources. Children drink in knowledge eagerly and with absolute delight. God has so made us that we should have knowledge, but all knowledge must be living knowledge.

Human nature must be studied in other forms, in architecture ancient and modern, in Art, in the development of creation in all points, until we arrive at the mind of man. Languages, classical and modern, are studied to give new ideas of the workings of human nature.

War has been waged lately between what is called secular and what is called religious education. We do not divide education into secular and religious in the ordinary acceptation of the terms, but rather into secular and sacred—all dead education is secular, all education in which are living thoughts and ideas is sacred. "I willed and sense was given unto me, I prayed and the spirit of wisdom came upon me." The same idea is expressed in the fresco of the Spanish Chapel—that all living knowledge does and must come from the one great intellect of the universe.

We are a little in the attitude of Emerson, who said, "I willed and I prayed." We too believe that every bit of living teaching in our schoolrooms is actually under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that all the new ideas which we receive are gifts from above. As Coleridge puts it, certain minds are chosen, and are specially fitted to be the channels through which higher and fuller revelation is vouchsafed to us, and this applies to all forms of knowledge, not only to that which is generally called religious.

The P.N.H.U. is a society worthy of great efforts; it is a centre of living thought, and each branch is a focus of the best and highest thoughts of the district in which it is formed, and it must shed its influence around it, even upon those who are not members. These who are members owe certain duties to the Society—each individual ought to work with exceeding vigour in the propagation of the work of the Society; they should try and influence their immediate neighbours and write to their friends at a distance. The excuse which is so often given that the people near are not the sort of people to be interested in the subjects of education is no valid

excuse at all, in fact it is rather a conceited thing to say, and simply means that we ourselves are so much more capable of enthusiasm and high thoughts than our neighbours are.

The Editor is sorry to have given such a poor and imperfect account of what was a most inspiring speech, but as she knows words from Miss Mason are always helpful, she has done her best to pass on to others as much as she can remember, and she only hopes she has followed the right train of thought, and given the spirit if not the words.

## NATURAL HISTORY.

### AN EXCURSION TO HUMPHREY HEAD.

MANY of you will remember a delightful outing we once had to Furness Abbey. We have recently had a similar excursion to a delightful place in Morecambe Bay, where we had a very festive time indeed on the sea shore. We started early in the morning by steamer down the lake. I am quite sure that no one needs telling how pleasant that was, it is so nice to begin and end a day out on Windermere, as we all know. We reached our destination about eleven o'clock, and as we had not to leave until nearly five, we had plenty of time before us. Having arranged about tea at a very convenient hotel, the station-master kindly took us through a very interesting railway cutting (where we found ever so many new flowers) to the sands. On a bank by the railway we found two Rock Roses and Tufted Horse-shoe Vetch. Close by, on the sands, we found Thrift in abundance. You will guess how many delighted exclamations were heard on all sides as one new thing after another was discovered. Skirting the rocks by the edge of the sands, or walking straight across, we soon found ourselves on the great bold headland of limestone that we were bound for; for nearly a mile and a half it juts out into the sea, running almost directly north and south, and being nowhere more than a quarter of a mile in width. On the side we first approached we found a delightful wood, full of lovely flowers; some we had seen before in the woods by Windermere, but others were found here and in